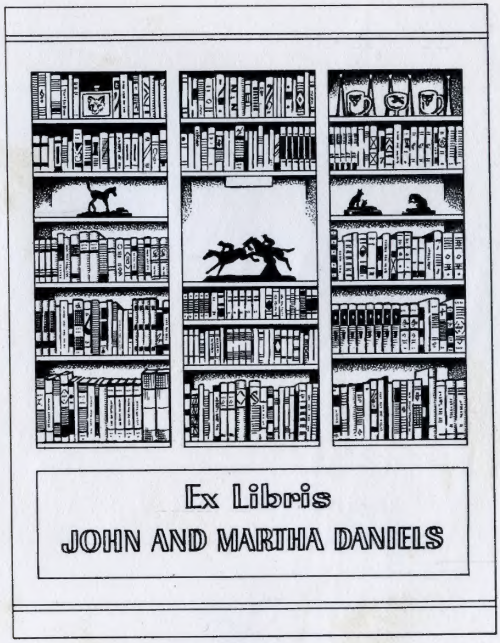
FRANK GRAY GRISWOLD

AMOS TUCK FRENCH

TUCKS EDEN

TUXEDO PARK

PCTY



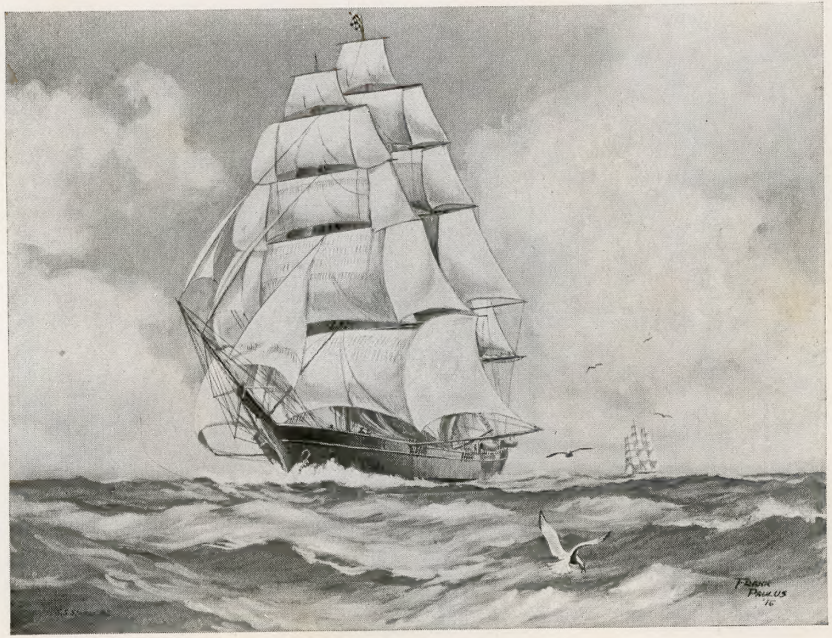
Amoo.

Compliments of

J. Gray Kinsworthy
1926.

The House Flags
of the
Merchants of New York

THE PLIMPTON PRESS
NORWOOD
MASS
U·S
A



The *Panama* III

THE HOUSE FLAGS OF THE MERCHANTS OF NEW YORK 1800–1860

F. GRAY GRISWOLD

PRIVATELY PRINTED
1926

The *Panama* III

THE HOUSE FLAGS OF THE MERCHANTS OF NEW YORK

1800–1860

F. GRAY GRISWOLD

PRIVATELY PRINTED
1926

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BY FRANK GRAY GRISWOLD

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FOREWORD

I HAVE *put this little book together in order to preserve the House Flags of the Merchants of New York which were well known in the four quarters of the globe between* 1800 *and* 1860 *but have been almost forgotten at the present day.*

F. G. G.

The House Flags
of the
Merchants of New York

Wm. Whitlock, Jr.

Union Line Havre P.
Bolton, Fox & Livingston
Wm. Whitlock, Jr.

N. L. & G. Griswold.

Howland & Aspinwall.

Moses Taylor.

E. K. Collins & Co.
Liverpool Line.

E. K. Collins & Co.
New Orleans Line.

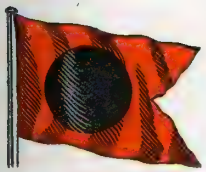
Josiah Macy & Son.

John Griswold,
London Line.

Gordon & Talbot.

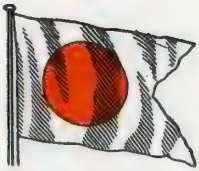
Fred'k Gebhard & Co.

Baldwin & Co.



Goodhue & Co. or
C. H. Marshall.
O. Line Liverpool P.

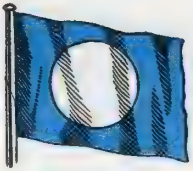
Hicks & Co.
Liverpool Line.



Wm. Nelson,
New Orleans Line.

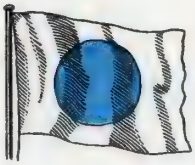
Taylor & Merrill.

A. Foster & Sons,
Rio Janeiro Line.
FIGURE FROM 1 TO 4.



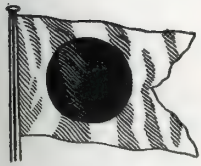
G. Sutton,
Charleston Line.

Post & Phillips.



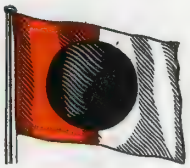
G. Bulkley,
Charleston Line.

Robert Kermit,
Liverpool Line.



C. Barstow & Pope.

Brander & Maury



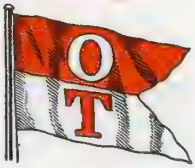
Goodhue & Co.

Peter Harmony & Co.

Grinnell, Minturn & Co.
London Line.

Dunham & Dimon,
Charleston Line.

P. A. Hargous,
Vera Cruz Line.

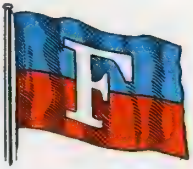


Oliphant & Co.

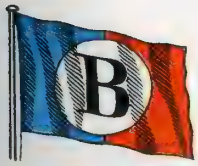
D. H. Schmidt's Son
& Co.

Edward Noltenius &
Pavenstad.

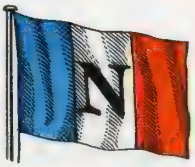
Glover & McMurray.



Johnson & Lowden,
Savannah Line.

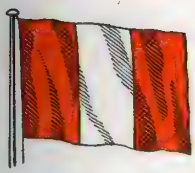


S. Broom.



Everett & Battelle.

G. Gorden.

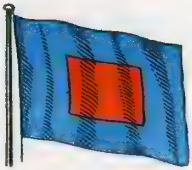


J. Laidlaw & Whitlock.

Mason & Thompson.

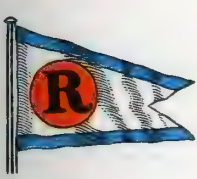
Jos. Foulke & Sons.

Green & Co.
Ship Severn.



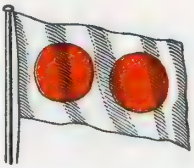
Oelrichs & Kruger,
Bremen Line.

O. Mauran.



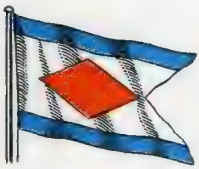
Sturges & Clearman,
Mobile Line.

A. Bell & Co.

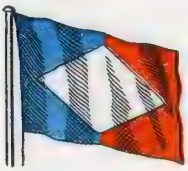


Dunham & Dimon,
Savannah Line.

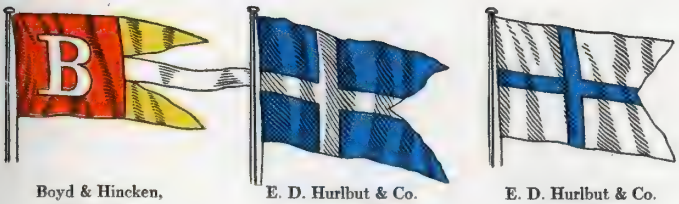
Johnson & Lowden.



Sturges & Clearman.



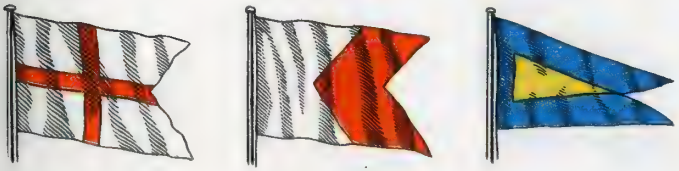
J. W. Alsop, Jr.



Boyd & Hincken,
Havre Line.

E. D. Hurlbut & Co.
Apalachicola Line.

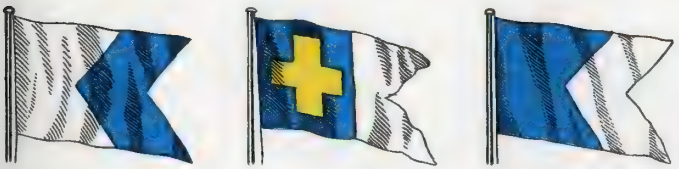
E. D. Hurlbut & Co.
Mobile Line.



E. D. Hurlbut,
Pensacola Line.

Scott & Morrell,
Savannah Line.

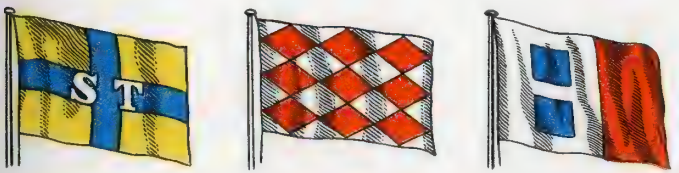
Robert I. Walker.



Scott & Morrell,
New Orleans Line.

M. & R. Maury.

Grinnell, Minturn & Co.
Liverpool Line.



Spofford & Tillitson.

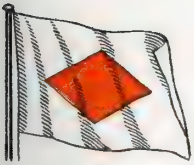
B. Aymar & Co.

P. I. Farnham & Co.

John Jacob Astor

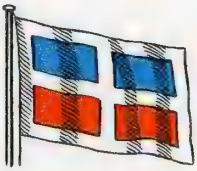
D. H. Robertson,
Ship H. Kneeland.

Ship Adirondack.



R. M. Demill.

Center & Co.



A. Hubbard & Co.

The Merchants of Old New York

THE MERCHANTS OF OLD NEW YORK

FROM 1800 until the Civil War the merchants of New York were the leaders of the city commercially, financially, politically and also socially. The word merchant did not mean a green-grocer or haberdasher as it does today, but described a man with large capital who was an exporter of domestic and an importer of foreign goods, who owned his own ships and usually their cargoes as well.

In the very early days the merchants traded chiefly along our coast and their vessels were sloops, which is the Dutch name for single-stickers. In those days the East River water-front was Water Street but as the ships increased in size and deeper water was necessary the land was filled in,

first to Front Street and later to South Street as it is today.

During the first fifty years of the last century the chief industry along our Eastern Coast was shipbuilding. As far back as 1668 the Chairman of the East India Company in England wrote: "Of all the American plantations, His Majesty has none so apt for building of shipping as New England, nor any comparably so qualified for the breeding of seamen, not only by reason of the natural industry of that people, but principally by reason of their cod and mackerel fisheries, and in my poor opinion there is nothing more prejudicial, and in prospect more dangerous, to any mother kingdom, than the increase in shipping in her colonies, plantations and provinces." Even at that time many of the spars and much of the timber that went into His Majesty's ships had grown on American soil and, owing to the plentiful supply of timber, ships soon could be more cheaply built in America than in England. About 1720 complaints were heard in England that the New England

Black Ball Line Packet

shipyards were drawing away the best of the English ship carpenters.

After the Revolutionary War the merchants of Salem, Boston, and New York vied with each other in sending ships to all parts of the world.

Before the War of 1812 England held the proud title of the Mistress of the Seas, for she had defeated Spain, Holland, and France, but during that war her fighting ships and merchantmen were sorely harassed by the more lightly built, fast-sailing frigates and privateers of the United States. Our vessels were modeled after the fast luggers of France, which were chiefly used in smuggling enterprises. It was from these vessels that the models of the first American frigates and privateers originated. As England had kept her colonies as much as possible in ignorance of naval affairs, we had to copy the models of French vessels. The greatest breadth of these vessels was well forward of amidships and at the wateredge, with a slight, gracefully receding tumblehome to the plank sheer. The after-body

was finely moulded, clean, sharp, and long with a powerful transom and quarters.

The British ships were of heavier construction than ours and much heavier aloft; their masts and yards were not so long and their canvas, being heavier and cut with a belly to it, did not hold the wind when close-hauled. Our vessels sailed rings around them. If a combat became too hot our ships could often escape on account of their superior speed.

Shipping was greatly stimulated by the after effects of the War of 1812. The Liverpool packets, the Black Ball Line, came out in 1816. In 1821, a packet line was started between Philadelphia and Liverpool and Grinnell & Minturn's Swallowtail Line from New York to London followed in 1823.

The first clipper ship, the *Ann McKim,* was built in Baltimore in 1823. It is not known how the word clipper originated, for there were "clipper brigs" and "clipper schooners" in Baltimore before that date. It is supposed to have come from the expression "going at a clip" or high speed. The

The Clipper *Challenge*

Ann McKim was also the first ship ever built by reproducing the lines of a smaller vessel — a "clipper schooner." She was 143 feet long and 493 tons register. She was followed some years later by the *Rainbow* built for Howland & Aspinwall, then by the *Akbar* in 1839, the *Helena* built in 1841 for N. L. & George Griswold, and the *Courier* was built in 1842 by Donald McKay. The *Houqua, Montauk,* and the first *Panama* followed. The latter was built by my grandfather for the China trade and the firm later owned two other ships with the same name. The renowned *Sea Witch,* which still holds the record of 77 days from Canton to New York, was finished in 1846. The clipper ships gradually increased in size and were the fastest ships ever built, yet much of their speed was owing to the skill and energy of their American captains, for they carried sail in all weathers and never shortened canvas or hove-to unless absolutely necessary. The old English custom of shortening sail at nightfall was abandoned. This meant shorter voyages and the saving

of much money. The foreign ships would touch at different ports in the course of a long voyage, but the Yankee skipper would sail from Boston or New York for Canton direct, stay there a few days, load up with tea and return by the same route. Speed was desired because it was an economy and the first cargo of a season's teas brought big prices.

Gold was discovered in California in 1848 and much larger ships were designed. In 1851 my father built the *Challenge* of 2006 tons, the largest and finest clipper of her day. Her mainmast was 97 feet long and her main-yard 90 feet in length. She carried 12,780 running yards of cotton canvas, with skysails, studding-sails and ringtail, and she was painted black with a band of gold along the line of her sheer, and carried 56 men before the mast. *Challenge* was commanded on her first trip to San Francisco, in 108 days, by Captain Waterman, longtime captain of the celebrated *Sea Witch.* Fortunes were made or lost on round voyages to China or to California, but the end of the

golden harvest came with the Civil War. The war lasted four years and during that time most of the ships that were owned in New York and New England were either destroyed by Confederate raiders or were sold abroad to save them from that fate.

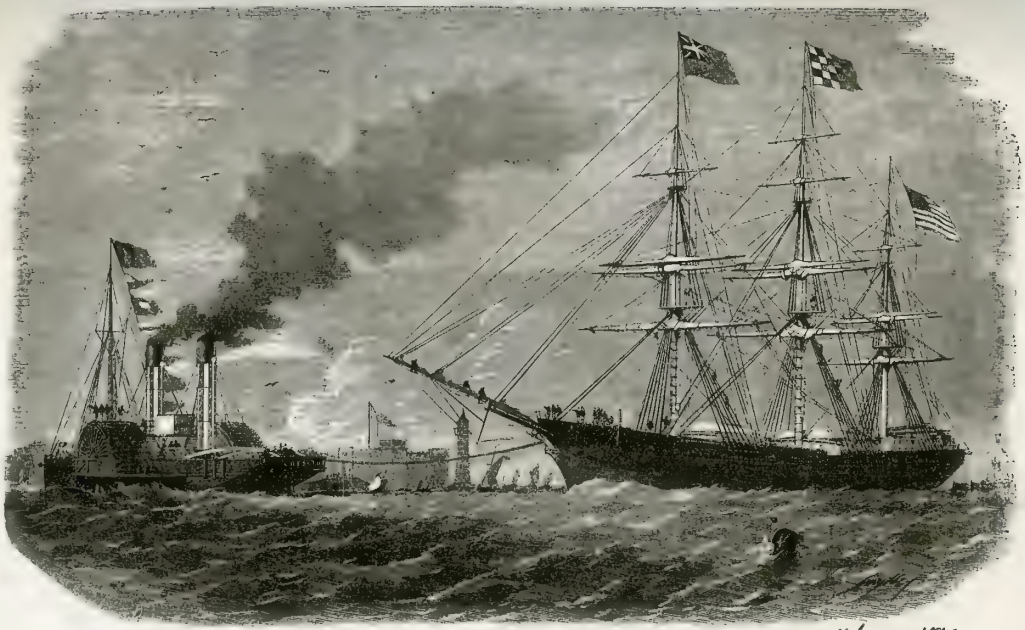
After the war was over, owing to unwise laws, the conditions were but little better for the American shipowners. In order to protect a few shipbuilders along our coast a law was passed forbidding any vessel not built in the United States from flying the American flag. Iron tramp steamers had begun to take the place of sailing ships in England, for owing to smaller crews they could be run more cheaply. As there were no facilities for the building of iron ships in America in those days, our flag was gradually driven off the seas and our merchants to the wall. Some firms, like A. A. Low & Co., hung on for a few years but found their sailing ships could not compete with the British tramps. It was not the lack of brains and pluck of our merchants that ruined our shipping, but unwise United States laws. What

had been America's greatest industry for one hundred and fifty years was destroyed by legislation. The American flag, which had been proudly flying in every port in the world, disappeared, and we have been paying heavy tribute to foreign countries ever since for carrying our merchandise.

In 1847 the United States had 1,241,313 tons of shipping in foreign commerce.

As shipbuilding was the great industry, it is natural that the shipbuilders should have been men of great prominence in the community. Such names as Steers, Webb, Collier, Magoun, McKay, Train, Bell, Westervelt, Hall and others are today of great social importance.

The sea captains were often gentlemen born, well educated, and men of great integrity. They owned shares in the ships they commanded and often in the cargoes as well. Their families are prominent today: Osgood, Marshall, DePeyster, Delano, Trask, Woodhouse, Palmer, Babcock, Morgan, Very, Cutting, Samuels, Russell, Waterman, Lane, Johnson, and many others.



THE GEORGE GRISWOLD, IN TOW OF THE RESOLUTE, ENTERING THE MERSEY: THE ROCK FORT SALUTING (DIPPING THE ENSIGN) February 1853

The *George Griswold*

At Liverpool

RECORD VOYAGES

New York to Hong-kong

Houqua 84 days in 1844

Canton to New York

Natchez 78 days in 1845

Sea Witch 77 days in 1846

Both vessels were commanded by Captain Waterman.

New York to San Francisco

Flying Cloud 2 voyages in 89 days in 1851 and 1854

Swordfish in 90 days in 1852

Andrew Jackson in 89 days in 1860

Northern Light around the Horn in 76 days 5 hours in 1853

Comet around the Horn in 76 days in 1854

San Francisco to New York

San Francisco to Boston

Boston to Rock Light, Liverpool

James Baines in 12 days 6 hours in 1854, and later in 1854 she sailed from Liverpool to Melbourne in the record time of 63 days

GOODHUE & CO.

THIS firm was founded by Jonathan Goodhue in 1809. He came from Salem, Mass. It was at first Goodhue & Swett and became Goodhue & Co. in 1819 when Mr. Perit became a partner. Their first place of business was at 34 Old Slip, moving afterwards to 44 and later to 64 South Street. They did a very large business and acted as agents for commercial firms in all parts of the world. They had the Black Ball Packet Line to Liverpool, and a captain who had been in their employ, Captain Charles H. Marshall, was the agent for this line for many years.

Their most celebrated ship was probably the *Mandarin*.

The firm was dissolved in 1861.

FREDERICK GEBHARD & CO.

THE first Frederick Gebhard came to New York from Holland as agent for the firm of Meder & Zoon, distillers of *Swan Gin*, and it is on record that his firm imported 4,000 pipes of Gin in 1836. He took his nephew Shuchardt into partnership in 1822 and founded the firm of Gebhard & Co. They had a packet line to Holland. Mr. Gebhard lived in Greenwich Street over his office until 1821 when the firm moved to 21 Nassau Street. Gebhard died in 1832 and the house name was changed to Shuchardt Favre & Co. Favre had married Miss Gebhard. When Frederick Gebhard Jr. came of age, he was made a partner and the firm became Shuchardt & Gebhard. They did a large business in exporting furs and importing silks and liquors and eventually became the most important Dutch banking house in the city, their bills on Holland selling higher

than those of any other house. This Frederick was the father of the last Frederick Gebhard, the well-known man-about-town and racing man, who died in 1910.

The *George Griswold* captured by the *Georgia*

HOWLAND & ASPINWALL

THIS was for many years one of the greatest of the merchant houses. Joseph Howland was in the whaling business in New London. His son, G. G. Howland, came to New York and became a clerk with LeRoy, Bayard & McEvers, a firm that had been founded in 1790 and did business at 3 Hanover Square. Herman LeRoy lived over the office. William Bayard lived at 43 Wall Street and Charles McEvers at 34 Wall Street. Between this house and the Bank of New York there was a passage-way that led into Pine Street. In this passage-way were the offices of the prominent lawyers. While with this firm Howland was sent to Cuba as supercargo of a small vessel and on his return married the daughter of the rich Mr. William Edgar. This enabled him to form the firm of G. G. and S. S. Howland. Their place of business in 1820 was 67 Washington Street but they moved later

to 49 and 50 South Street. At first they traded with Cuba and Mexico, but later did a large China trade. In 1837 the firm was changed to Howland & Aspinwall. William H. Aspinwall, a nephew and a clerk in their office, was made a partner. He left the firm in 1850 to go into the Panama R. R. and S. S. Co. and founded the city of Aspinwall. G. G. Howland's second wife was the beautiful Miss Louise Meredith of Baltimore. S. S. Howland married the daughter of John Hone.

The firm owned many ships. The most celebrated were: *Ann McKim, Natchez, Rainbow* and *Sea Witch.*

GRINNELL MINTURN & CO.

IN 1815 this firm's name was Fish & Grinnell and consisted of Preserved Fish and Moses Grinnell, who both came from New Bedford. The junior partner was Saul Alley, a Quaker, and my maternal grandfather. In 1832 the firm of Grinnell Minturn & Co. was formed. Robert B. Minturn, a partner, was the son of Edward Minturn of Champlin & Minturn. They did a very large shipping business and owned the Swallowtail Packet Line to London. Their most celebrated ships were: *Flying Cloud, North Wind, Sea Serpent, Sweepstakes,* and *Sovereign of the Seas.*

Preserved Fish was a well-known character in New York for over fifty years. He was given his name by a New Bedford fisherman who found him, when a baby, floating in a fish-box at sea. He lived at 486 Pearl Street

in 1812. In his later years he was President of the Tradesmen's Bank in Chatham Square. He died at 387 4th Street, about 1850.

JOHN JACOB ASTOR

HE was a great and very successful merchant. He was born in Waldorf, Germany, in 1763 and arrived in New York in 1784. Astor seems to have been an intelligent and well-educated man, for I find he was Master of Holland Lodge in 1798. His first place of business was 71 Liberty Street and he lived at 40 Little Dock, now Water Street. He founded the American Fur Co. in 1810 and furs were his specialty. It was his custom to send a ship loaded with flour to Oregon where she would partly load with furs, sail for Canton, stopping at the Sandwich Islands, and load up with "firewood." It took years for his competitors to discover that that "firewood" was really sandal wood which brought $500 a ton in China. The vessel would then sail for New York with a cargo of tea. Two of his early ships were the *Seneca* and the *Beaver*. Captain DePeyster commanded the former. Samuel

G. Ogden was Astor's partner at one time and Jacob B. Taylor, the father of Moses Taylor, his chief business man.

For years Mr. Astor's business was carried on at 177 Pearl Street on the corner of Pine Street. From 1802–26 he lived at 223 Broadway. John G. Coster and David Lydig lived on the same block. Astor bought all the houses on this block and built the celebrated Astor House in 1832. He had a country-seat at about where 86th Street now is. He prospered and invested his savings in New York real estate and died a very rich man.

His grandson, who was the grandfather of the present Viscount Astor, married Miss Gibbs.

N. L. & G. GRISWOLD

THIS firm was founded in 1796 and continued to do business under the same name for eighty years. Two brothers, Nathaniel Lynde and George Griswold, came from East Lyme, Connecticut, in 1794. They were descended in the fifth generation from Matthew Griswold (Greswolde) who arrived from Kenilworth, Warwickshire, England, in 1639 and who was the first Magistrate of Saybrook Colony.

In the parish church of St. Alphege at Solihill, which is not far from Kenilworth, there are two incised alabaster monumental slabs which were found, buried beneath some pews, in 1879. On the left-hand slab is inscribed:

"*Pray for the souls of Richard Greswolde, knight, and Alice, his wife, which Richard died on the 8th day of September 1537. On whose souls may God have mercy. Amen.*"

The inscription on the other slab runs thus:

"*Here lyeth the bodyse of Thomas Greswolde, of Silhill, county Warr, gent. and of Alice Jane and Isabelle, his wives, which Thomas deceased the 8th day of June 1577. He has issue by Alice his first wife one sonne, and seven daughters whom God grant a joyful resurrection.*"

Nathaniel L. Griswold was a famous character and was known to everyone as "Uncle Nat." He was the grandfather of the late Pierre Lorillard. George Griswold was my grandfather. Their place of business in 1800 was at 169 Front Street and they moved in 1803 to 86 South Street. About thirty years later my grandfather built the fortress-like granite building which still stands at 71 and 72 South Street. It was built from stone that was left over from the construction of the Custom House on Wall Street, now the City Bank. In those days South Street was narrow, so that from the balcony in front of the counting-room windows one could almost touch the bow-

sprit of one of the firm's ships in dock across the street, and as you drove along South Street there was a row of bowsprits overhead.

At first the firm did a coastal trade and later sent vessels to Cuba with flour and return cargoes of sugar. As they prospered they built larger ships and their business developed into the so-called China trade. Their vessels carried mixed cargoes to Canton and returned laden with tea. N. L. and G. G., known as "No Loss and Great Gain," owned their own ships and their cargoes as well, and it was they who first sold tea on its arrival at auction. These tea cargoes were valued with the duties at from $400,000 to $700,000, according to the size of the vessel.

Russell & Co. of Canton were the firm's correspondents. My two uncles, John C. Green and John N. A. Griswold, as well as my cousin, George Griswold Gray, were sent to China as supercargoes, were taken into Russell & Co., and retired with fortunes.

George Griswold lived at 10 Cedar Street

in 1812 and at 15 Wall Street in 1820. This house was pre-empted by the Government in order to build the Assay Office. Just west of where this house once stood is the Sub-Treasury. This corner has great historic importance. Here stood the second City Hall in 1700 which was rebuilt in 1789 and became Federal Hall, the first Capitol of the United States. The present City Hall was finished in 1812 and the old building on the corner of Wall and Nassau Streets was demolished and the lots sold. In 1817 the Government purchased the land and a Custom House was built and occupied from 1817 to 1831. The building as it now is, the Sub-Treasury, was completed in 1839.

My grandfather moved to 57 Chambers Street and in 1845 lived at 9 Washington Square. He died in 1859. My father and my uncle, George Winthrop Gray, continued the business.

When the citizens of New York heard in 1862 that the cotton mill operatives were starving in Lancashire, England, a subscription was started by the Chamber of Com-

merce for their relief. The money collected was invested as follows: 13,236 barrels of flour, 316 boxes of bread, 50 barrels of pork, 167 bags of Indian corn, 50 barrels of beef, 102 barrels of bacon, 3 tierces and 2 bags of rice, to which the New York Produce Exchange added 1,500 barrels of flour, 500 barrels of Indian corn, and 50 barrels of pork. The value of this cargo was about £12,000. My father had a new ship just off the stocks, named the *George Griswold,* and his contribution to the fund was this ship and her expenses to carry the cargo to Liverpool.

The *George Griswold* was a fine ship 200 feet long, 38 ft. beam, by measurement 1280 tons, and carried 20 men before the mast. She was built of oak, copper-bolted throughout, and had double topsail yards. Owing to the high price of cotton her sails were of Scotch hemp canvas. Captain Lunt volunteered to command her without remuneration. The risks at the time were very great as the ocean was infested with Confederate raiders. Before she sailed from New York

she was blessed by a clergyman and I remember the ceremony distinctly; I was eight years old. She arrived safely in Liverpool on February 10th, 1863, and received a great reception. It was shortly after the British Government had allowed the Confederate raider *Alabama* to sail, so that under these circumstances the unselfish generosity of the American people was greatly appreciated in England.

The risks were so great at the time that the *George Griswold* could not obtain a return cargo. She sailed in ballast for Brazil and was captured by the raider *Georgia.*

Among the good ships that N. L. & G. Griswold owned were: *Helena, Ariel, Panama, Tarolinta* and *Challenge.*